lars in each district has to be given to the lead bank of that district. The Lead Bank after consolidating the lists received from all banks submits it to the District Collector for recommendations and onward transmission to RBI through the concerned State Government. Under the Branch Licensing Policy (1990—95), opening of branches of Public Sector Banks is a continuous process and hence it is not possible to project the number of branches that will be opened in the rural areas of Tamil Nadu during the current year.

1051. [*Transferred to the 9th December* 1991]

World Bank advice against soft options

1052.SHRI R. T. GOPALAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the World Bank had given any advice against soft options during Aid India Consortium meet at Paris; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) and (b) In the 1990-91 country Economic Memorandum (prepared by the World Bank), the World Bank has observed, "India no longer has soft options. Trade-offs between cutting expenditure and raising taxes and between restraining defence expenditures and solwing spending on social programs and/or infrastructural investment will require hard choices. India's pleadge to give "human face'" to adjustment and reform offers a unique challenge to donors. If India is prepared to follow through on the hard choices, the donor community should be prepared to strengthen its support significantly". The Country Economic Memorandum is prepared by the World Bank for facilititating consultation at Aid India consortium meetings.

Uniform sales tax on Commodities

1053. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD: will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether as a policy sales tax on commodities are being made uniform; and

(b) whether the list of declared goods under Fourth schedule will be expanded to include Jaggery, Chillies, tea powder, kerosene, coconut oil, arecanut, cement, medicines, soaps, animal feeds, edible oils and cereals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) Sales-tax is a State subject under the Constitution. Therefore, policy is decided by the respective States. In the Chief Ministers' Conference held in February, 1989 it was decided that the States and Union Territories would adopt the minimum floor level rates in respect of the 29 identified items recommended by the Committee of the Sales-Tax Commissioners.

(b) There is no proopsal to expand the list of declared goods.

Fraud cases in UCO Bank Chandigarh

1054. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE:
SHRI BEKAL UTSAHI:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the report appearing in the Tribune of September 26, 1991, captioned "Crores missing from Bank" in relation to various frauds and embezzlement of the UCO Bank (Sector 17B) Chandigarh Branch;

(b) if so, whether any inquiries have been conducted into the affairs of this bank;

(c) the number of frauds and embezzlement cases detected; and

(d) the details of action taken thereon?